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February/March 1997

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Newsletter of the Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Nancy Keenan, Superintendent
Vol. 40, No. 3

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Are your school district's connectivity needs being met? If not, SummitNet might be the answer.

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And More . . .

We'll miss you, Jack!

Jack Copps reflects on his career in Montana education

Thirty-seven years after chance moved him to Poplar, Montana, and made him a teacher instead of a journalist or chef, Jack Copps has retired from being a full-time educator.

In an interview on his last day as Montana's deputy superintendent, Copps said, "I can't imagine having a more satisying career. The joy of working hard and knowing it's worthwhile—I discovered that in education. Looking back, I wouldn't do anything differently."

And, Jack Copps has done a lot. His career has spanned all facets of education in Montana. He started in Poplar teaching English, journalism, and speech. He stayed in the classroom for 17 years and then was recruited into administration.

As an administrator he was a high school principal, an assistant superintendent and a superintendent for the Helena Schools. For the last eight years he worked with State Superintendent Nancy Keenan as deputy superintendent of public instruction.

I can't imagine having a more satisfying career. The joy of working hard and knowing it's worthwhile—I discovered that in education. Looking back, I wouldn't do anything differently.

—Jack Copps

Every February schools across Montana celebrate "I Love to Read!" Month, devising fun activities that encourage students to develop a life-long love of reading (see page 6).

The move to adminstrator

When asked whether he missed the classroom, Copps replied, "You can't teach and not miss the classroom—the contact with the

(Continued on page 3)

This year, breaking with a well-established tradition, the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate declined to allow State Superintendent Keenan and Commissioner of Higher Education Crofts to deliver "State of the State of Education" addresses to Montana's State Legislature. Instead, they asked a teacher, a university student, and a high school student to offer their views to legislators. What follows is the speech that Hilary Fairbrother, the high school student, gave to the combined House and Senate. Also speaking were Mark Lalum, a Vo-Ed teacher in Kalispell and Mike Green, the Board of Regents' student representative.

A Montana student's thoughts on public education

Hilary Fairbrother speaks to the Montana State Legislature

It is a great honor and privilege to be speaking with you today. I feel excited, a little overwhelmed, and I feel a tremendous responsibility to the students of Montana to represent them to you in a way that is honest, accurate, and useful to you as lawmakers.

I am a senior at Capital High School here in Helena, and this is my seventh year in our Montana schools. My family loves Montana. Montana is a great place to grow up in and Helena is a wonderful place to go to school.

I have so many people to thank for so many quality educational opportunities. I have been taught by talented and dedicated teachers, benefitted from caring administrators and learned from school board trustees who are genuinely committed to children and to public education. And, I want Nancy Keenan to know that it does not go unnoticed by the students of Montana that she is always on our side. But most of all, I want to thank my mother. My father died seven years ago, when I was 11. My mother has dedicated her life to her three children: myself, my older sister and my younger brother. She is always there, encouraging, prodding, supporting, loving, and when needed, pushing us in the right direction.

The important points

I have thought day and night ever since I was asked to do this about what the most important, critical, vital points I should address in these few minutes. I decided that there were three issues I just had to talk about, and they are adequate funding, the condition of Montana's children, and a little bit about the expectations we must have of each other.

Let me begin by sharing with you my dream of becoming a doctor, and more specifically a surgeon. I don't want to merely treat disease. I want to prevent suffering and help people live long, happy and productive lives. I tell you this because I think it directly relates to the three points I hope to make.

On books and budgets

It is said that teenagers think they know everything. But, I can

(Continued on page 3)

DEADHEAD

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Message from Nancy Keenan

In January, my office prepared a publication for legislators outlining the state of Montana's schools, supporting increased funding for schools, and introducing a package of services we at OPI hoped to be able to provide to districts for your school improvement efforts. I thought you might like to read the letter that I enclosed in the packet.

A letter to our legislators...

During the past six years, Montana has faced a host of challenges. The world as we have known it is changing daily. The number of people moving to Montana has caused an increase in school enrollment, property values, and prison populations. Technology has changed the way we communicate, the way we work, and the way we learn.

Many of these changes create challenges for Montanans, but many can also present opportunities — for our state, our communities, and our students. It just takes planning and preparation. At the same time, however, ignoring or failing to plan for these changes is a recipe for disaster. Nowhere is this more true than in Montana's schools.

The publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 focused the attention of the public, educators, and policymakers on the consequences of inaction. Since then, public concern has continued to increase. In 1996, A Gallup-Poll commissioned by CNN and USA Today found that education for the first time surpassed crime and economy as the public's most pressing concern.

Responding to this increasing public concern, Governors Tommy Thompson of Wisconsin and Bob Miller of Nevada called together a National Education Summit which was held in March of 1996. That summit assembled 48 of the nation's governors and 48 prominent business leaders. They called for concentrated action on the part of state leaders to help improve their state's schools. At a follow-up State Education Improvement Partnership Conference this past summer, state leaders agreed upon the following:

- High academic standards are important to improving educational performance of all students;
- Assessment and accountability issues are sensitive and require strong leadership from state policymakers and educators;
- Public engagement and parental and community involvement are critical components of effective school reform;
- Collaboration among government, schools, and communities, and across agencies and disciplines can ensure that local school improvement strategies are implemented efficiently, efforts are not duplicated, and best practices are shared; and
- Improvements in professional development and teacher preparation must be an integral part of states' systemic education improvement plans.

We need to make sure that Montana's children are prepared for their future, and we all have a role to play in making Montana's good schools better. Supporting our schools and students requires investment — in both time and money — on the part of our leaders, legislators, the Office of Public Instruction, and local school districts and communities.

I look forward to working with each of you to make sure that Montana's students do not get left behind.

Nancy Keenan

If you would like to read the entire publication, an electronic copy is available on METNET. The title is "Improving Montana's Schools." You can find it via the path: Educational News -> Information Services -> From OPI.

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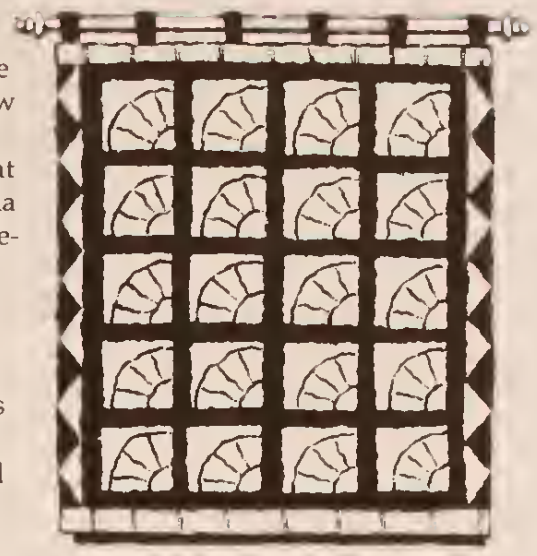
A new resource for exploring women's contributions to the arts



Each March is Women's History Month around the nation, and this year a new resource is available to schools, galleries, and museums that want to explore the lives of 16 Montana women honored for their achievements in the arts.

A packet of one-page profiles features musicians, artists, writers, actors and others who have been recipients of the Governor's Awards for the Arts since 1981. The packet contains biographical sketches with photos of the 16 outstanding women from such places as Arlee and Absarokee, Forsyth and Radersburg, as well as the bigger cities of Missoula, Bozeman, Billings and Great Falls.

In highlighting the various women's works and deeds, the profiles are intended to be both instructive and inspirational.

Anyone wanting a packet should send a self-addressed label and $1.50 to cover postage and handling to: Montana Chapter of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, P.O. Box 448, Helena, MT 59624. ■

OPI staff work to coordinate and streamline reporting requirements

During the past two years, members of the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) staff served on a team to improve reporting and application processes for federal programs.

Consolidated plan

Staff's efforts began with the development of a system allowing school districts to submit assurances common to federal programs as one document, rather than submitting individual assurances for each program.

The work of this team also resulted in a more concise application process for school districts to use in applying for funds for Titles I, II, IV and VI of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

As a result of these efforts, the consolidated application replaced four separate applications used in the past. The new application requires less information than previously collected. School districts remain responsible for fulfilling the requirements of each program.

Coordinating programs

This year a new team, the OPI Program Coordinating Committee (PCC), is exploring the possibility of extending this consolidation to additional programs and processes.

In addition, the PCC will review the operations of all OPI programs that distribute funds and provide assistance to schools. The team will work to eliminate any inconsistencies and inefficiencies in OPI operating policies and procedures, both fiscal and programmatic.

The team will also prepare and distribute a handbook for all educators and school business officials in Montana.

Team members

PCC Co-chairs are Nancy Coopersmith and Kathy Fabiano. Team members include: Joan Anderson, Dori Burns Nielson, Julia Dilly, Joanne Erickson, Carol Gneckow, BJ Granbery, Mary McAulay, Robert Runkel, Spencer Sartorius, and Linda Vrooman Peterson.

One of the first tasks the PCC team undertook was to develop a shared vision to guide their work. The "guiding principles" in the above box outline that vision. ■

—Nancy Coopersmith, PCC Co-chair, OPI

Guiding principles

- ✔ Keep our eyes on the prize—improved teaching and learning.
- ✔ Develop a woven braid of services for children and families.
- ✔ Reduce hardening of the categories: break down mythological barriers.
- ✔ Reduce program isolation and duplication of efforts to provide consistency in all programs.
- ✔ Streamline processes for school districts and OPI.
- ✔ Ask, "Is there a better way?" Formalize processes.
- ✔ Improve communication—within OPI and with school districts.
- ✔ Take advantage of flexibility the federal government has offered states.

Jack Copps, cont.

students is so fulfilling. I feel sorry for the people who've never experienced the joy of teaching, it is unbelievably satisfying."

"But," he added, "so is the work of a school administrator. The very best school administrators provide quality support services to teachers." He explains, "I have tremendous respect for the work that classroom teachers perform, and I enjoyed my years in school administration because I learned I could be helpful to classrooms and the work being done in the classroom."

What has changed in education

Over the past 37 years, Copps believes that educators' basic values and beliefs have not changed. "Today is no different from when I began," he said. "The vast majority of educators want to be the very best they can be, and they want the best for their students."

What has changed, Copps believes, is the fact that children come to school today in so many different conditions. When they enroll in first grade, some students can read fluently, some cannot tell the difference between colors, and some haven't ever seen a book. What is most difficult for schools and teachers, notes Copps, is not being able to predict and prepare for what their students need so they can learn and feel challenged, but not be left behind.

"Schools," he explains, "simply don't have the resources to teach to all those conditions."

It takes more than a school

Public schools are expected to deal with this disparity — and deal with it successfully. "Schools cannot be the fix-all," states Copps. Everyone needs to value education and to actively support it. "Education is only at its best when parents, community, and the state are involved," he states.

Funding for education

While educators strive to meet the needs of their students, Copps observes that there "seems to be a a number of people who are intent upon dismantling public education. They are driven to control the cost; their interest is in controlling spending, not in quality education."

Most of these people, Copps notes, do not know schools and, often, haven't been in a school for a decade or so. "I am convinced a majority of people in this state have no idea how good our schools really are," he says, citing studies that have demonstrated that the people who visit schools most often also rate them much higher than people who do not.

Jack Copps

Good news

The good news, according to Copps, is that "educators are pluggers. Regardless of the unfairness of criticism, educators continue to do a marvelous job and kids today are learning more than they ever have! I am absolutely positive graduates of Montana's high schools will be successful competing with other kids anywhere, whether the Montana kids come from a one-room school house or our largest school district."

"We're a great exporter of well-educated students," he notes. "States all over our nation love and recruit our product!" "That in itself," Jack Copps said, "is testimony to the work I do." ■

Assistive technology workshop

On April 2, 1997, the Communication Aid Manufacturers Association (CAMA) will hold a workshop at the Missoula Village Red Lion Inn.

Participants will have the opportunity to see and learn how to help people communicate using a wide variety of assistive technology products. The workshop is designed to help participants gain an understanding of what software and hardware is most appropriate for an individual student. Also addressed is how to teach functional use in a variety of communication settings. Representatives from 12 different leading manufacturers of assistive technology will be on hand to demonstrate their products and explain their benefits for children as well as adults with a variety of disabilities.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association has approved this workshop for .4 Continuing Education Units. Pre-registration Is $25 and on-site registration is $40.00. More registration information is available from Barb Larsen at the MonTECH Program (800-732-0323) or Marilyn Pearson, OPI (444-4428). ■

Student speaks on education, cont.

I ask, on behalf of Montana's children, that you make education funding such a high priority that in our future we need fewer prison beds and more libraries. I don't ever recall reading that a civilization failed because they spent too much money on education.

—Hilary Fairbrother

tell you for sure, that this 17-year-old knows she does not even have a superficial knowledge of complex state budgets, school funding formulas, or revenue projections. What I do know is how hard it is to learn when there aren't enough text books to go around, or when the textbooks are outdated.

When I was a freshman, three World Cultures classes had to share one set of textbooks. The good news was that they were new. The bad news was that three students had to share a single book. You had to be fast to get a book the day before a test. Learning had more to do with athletic ability and luck than the desire to learn about world cultures. As a freshman I was not even five feet tall and I've never been fast or lucky. My chances of getting a book were pretty slim.

Like medical research and preventative medicine, textbooks cost money. However, every piece of research shows that prevention is much cheaper and more effective than leaving people untreated until the only medical option they have is incredibly expensive and usually futile.

Education, the best medicine

Education is the same way. We can pay now for education and reap the positive results of a highly skilled work force and responsible citizens or wait and pay ten times the price on law enforcement, welfare, and prisons. If this was a story problem in a fifth grade math class, Montana's ten-year-olds could give you the correct answer.

Though I do realize that our revenues are short and our needs are long, I ask, on behalf of Montana's children, that you make education funding such a high priority that in our future we need fewer prison beds and more libraries. I don't ever recall reading that a civilization failed because they spent too much money on education.

The condition of our children

Next, I want to talk about the condition of Montana's children. Every night I get to go to sleep in a comfortable bed, in a safe home. I wake up and there is food for breakfast. I have a warm coat and a mother to remind me to remember my lunch. I'm lucky and I know it. But, this is not how life is for thousands and thousands of children in Montana.

I go to school with a girl who doesn't have a home. She doesn't know from day to day where she will be staying. Sometimes she knows where her mother is, most often she doesn't. Food and clothing are luxuries. She feels angry and acts out that anger at school. Reducing support services for her will not alleviate her problems. She needs more help, not less. And, most importantly, she needs to stay in school.

I don't know if she'll make it. Going back to my medical analogy, she needs more than an aspirin and some cough syrup. She needs specialized treatment and if she doesn't get it, she will require treatment later that is dramatically more expensive.

We are, each one of us, your children — the rich, the poor, the academically gifted, the learning disabled, Indian, White, Asian, Black, the hungry and the neglected—and, we are your responsibility. The one sure way to care for us and to meet this responsibility is to give us a quality education. The painful truth is that it costs money.

Higher expectations

Finally, we need to raise our expectations. Students need to expect more of themselves. Teachers must seek excellence from themselves and from their students. Parents must get deeply involved in their children's education and expect great things from their children and their schools.

I had a classmate in sixth grade who just did enough to get by in all his classes. He didn't cause any trouble so he didn't get much attention. All of a sudden he got a teacher who didn't think just getting by was good enough. She made it clear that she expected more. And he surprised himself by meeting these new expectations. In fact, he made a habit of reaching higher and expecting more of himself. Today he is enrolled in honors classes and is leading others — teachers and students — in setting high goals and achieving them. On my way to becoming a surgeon I hope to be educated by teachers who expect me to succeed. My patients will be counting on it. ■

Hilary Fairbrother has been very active in education issues in Helena. She represents Capital High School (CHS) students on the Helena School Board and serves on the CHS Annual School Planning Committee. In addition, she is the co-captain of her school's speech and debate team. In her spare time, Fairbrother is a mentor and tutor for Helena area children, and she sings in CHS's premier choir, Saturday's Children.

SummitNet — come join us

Montana's own Internet reaches schools, and the world

The state of Montana is in the process of deploying SummitNet, one of the most complex and sophisticated network projects in the world. The joint resources of the Montana Department of Admininstration's Information Services Division (ISD), the Montana University System, and the Network Montana Project have been focused on building this statewide telecommunications network to serve the connectivity needs of government agencies and the education community.

Victoria Enger

Students work at computers

SummitNet defined

Literally, SummitNet is the acronym for *State and Universities of Montana Multi-Protocol Network*. Just as the highway system links cities and towns, SummitNet will link the widespread computer networks operated by Montana's schools, libraries, tribal colleges, universities, and government agencies.

After two years of development, the network became operational in the summer of 1996 and reached full deployment during last November. By providing access to the Internet (the world's largest computer network), SummitNet's impact extends beyond the far reaches of our state to the worldwide organizations on the Internet.

Directing traffic

Network traffic in the state may be funneled through one of ten aggregation points throughout Montana. High-speed data links and sophisticated routers tie these points together. When data is transmitted, the routers note the location of the destination computer and determine the best route to deliver the transmission. Montana's network traffic can be sent to or received from the Internet at two points in the state, Missoula and Bozeman.

Since SummitNet is based on a distributed network model, its design supports:

- ✔ a high degree of fault tolerance;
- ✔ the efficient use of available bandwidth (a line's capacity to carry information); and
- ✔ effective network monitoring and management.

School districts are invited

Already, Montana's universities, government agencies, tribal colleges, community colleges, and several school districts are using SummitNet to communicate with each other and organizations on the Internet. All Montana school districts are invited to participate.

Getting connected — Network Montana will help

The steps to Internet connectivity are really quite simple.

First, your school(s) should be wired, so that a functional network exists within and between school buildings. A district should have, or develop, a technology plan to guide the acquisition and installation of educational technology. Network connectivity will be a central piece of that plan.

School officials should also identify the people within the district who are responsible for technology support. Those people can then serve as information resources and as contact points for the network project. By contacting Network Montana, schools start a process that will ultimately put their district on SummitNet. This process consists of four parts:

- ✔ arranging for telecommunications circuits to carry network traffic to the nearest aggregation point;
- ✔ arranging a contract with SummitNet to provide access to the state network and the Internet;
- ✔ obtaining the appropriate routing and communication gear; and
- ✔ training district personnel to support and fully utilize the district's facilities.

(continued on page 5)

Field Notes

A learning experience and a community service

Two Polson High School students report on their school's Peer Counseling Class

New students in school, the loss of a friend, break-ups of relationships, and family upsets are just a few of the areas addressed by the Peer Counseling class at Polson High School (PHS).

Sherry Jones, the PHS counselor who teaches the class and runs the program, says Peer Counseling "focuses on teaching helping and communication skills to young people so they can be more effective friends and helpers."

Confidence and community

"Peer Counseling helps many PHS students build confidence," says Jones. Confidence helps students make the right decisions, and helps students build relationships by strengthening communication skills with friends and family.

"Students listen to other students," Jones adds. "A peer counseling program allows us to harness the power of positive peer influence. This makes for a more supportive PHS environment."

The program's positive effects reach beyond the high school's halls and classrooms. "Peer Counseling provides an outlet for a better sense of civic involvement, and a better sense of what we as a community can do to help better ourselves," says 1995-96 peer counselor Cameron Cole.

> **A peer counseling program allows us to harness the power of positive peer influence. This makes for a more supportive PHS environment.**
>
> **—Sherry Jones**

Last year, peer counselors were involved in many activities, including participating in the Postponing Sexual Involvement program, tutoring, visiting with elders, and being a "buddy" to elementary students.

The selection process

Only juniors or seniors can apply for the program. To be considered, students must complete an application consisting of about five essay questions and distribute evaluation forms to three of their teachers.

Students are selected as peer counselors based on their ability to relate well with peers and adults. "Equally important," says Jones, "are such characteristics as responsibility, maturity, common sense, genuine interest in others, and the ability to follow through on projects."

"Students' cumulative credits, GPA (2.5 cumulative required), and attendance are all taken into consideration," notes Jones.

The peer counseling class

Selected students enroll in Peer Counseling for a full year, receiving half an elective credit per semester. The first semester the class meets daily during the scheduled class time. "Peer counselors are trained in helping, listening, communication, assertiveness, conflict resolution, and problem solving skills," says Jones.

Second semester class participants are paired with a variety of different people. Some deal with elementary children and others visit with the elderly.

"Listening and being a friend, means the world to these people," says peer counselor Cole.

Growing experience for student participants

"This class has really added to my life, and the way I apply myself in being able to communicate with others," notes peer counselor, Robyn Wicks, who joined the program as a junior. "Peer Counseling made me a more patient and understanding individual," adds Cole.

"Peer Counseling not only benefits the participants of the Peer Counseling course, but PHS as a whole," notes Jones. The class gives students a chance to turn to responsible

(Continued on page 8)

Student relates his action on behalf of Internet access

Wolf Point's Frontier School links up to the "Net"

I am a student. A student who likes to learn in a fun way, but still learn. Hands on teaching makes a bigger impact on us. What could I do for my peers and me? Get the "Net." But how?

By putting in lots of hours of work and planning.

> **Sometimes as students we see things differently than the faculty and school board does. So it is important for us to have a voice and for them to listen. This simple communication helps us all to learn better.**
>
> **—Lech Walczak**

The approval process

First, I had to make my plan and gather information on the cost and why our school should get the Internet. Second, I had to talk with my school administrator to get it put on the agenda of a school board meeting and gather the support of others to attend the meeting. Third, I had to present it and make a good impression on the school board.

Lech Walczak

The effort was worth it

It was a lot of work, but I encourage other students to attempt to work hard for something they want at their school.

Sometimes as students we see things differently than the faculty and school board does. So it is important for us to have a voice and for them to listen. This simple communication helps us all to learn better.

Please share this article with your students and tell them they can do the same thing.

Ways to use the Internet

For ways to use the Internet in your classroom, check out our webpage on the Internet at *<www.wolfpoint.com/frontier>*.

The webpage also has a copy of the actual written board presentation. It also has information on our school and soon will have students' personal pages and our computer club page. Our computer club teaches advanced computer skills and meets after school. I hope you enjoy our webpage.

Thank you to everyone at my school for their input and their support. ■

—Lech Walczak, 8th grade student Frontier School in Wolf Point, MT

In addition to his work on Frontier School's webpage, Walczak is president of Frontier School's student council and computer club

Using technology to make a point about ... technology

In order to present his arguments to Wolf Point's school board, Walczak created a computer slide show to present to school trustees. In his slide show, he listed some of the ways Wolf Point's students and schools could benefit from access to the Internet.

Since our school is located in a rural area, our resources are limited. The Internet will tie us into the world. We will always have up-to-date information to learn from.

Another wonderful benefit of the "Net" is the World Wide Web. It contains lots of useful information.

More benefits the Internet provides is that it

- ✔ allows students to learn about other countries;
- ✔ benefits teachers with new teaching methods;
- ✔ keeps the school informed about education issues;
- ✔ gives answers to questions that can't be answered; and
- ✔ provides a good learning experience in a fun way.

Technology Literacy Challenge Grant applications soon available

Recently, the U.S. Congress set funds aside in Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for Technology Literacy Challenge Grants. This is the first year of a planned five-year, $2 billion effort nationwide, and Montana is slated to receive $1 million during the first year. A competitive grant process will determine how the money will be distributed to Montana's schools.

In order to obtain these funds, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) submitted a state application to the U.S. Department of Education in December. OPI will notify district and county superintendents that school district applications are available when Montana's state application is approved. Hopefully, notification can occur in late February or March.

The grant program's goal

The program's goal is to help schools acquire and use technology to improve the education they can offer their students. As a result, the funds from these grants may be used to support many activities, including:

- integrating technology into a district's curriculum to better student learning and achievement;
- installing the links necessary to connect to the information superhighway;
- providing teachers with ongoing professional development in the integration of educational technologies into the school's curriculum; and
- promoting, in individual schools, the sharing, distribution, and application of educational technologies with demonstrated effectiveness.

At a minimum, the following four major points must be included in a grant application.

- A strategic, long-range (three- to five-year) technology plan;
- A description of how the school district will involve parents, public libraries, and community leaders in the implementation of its technology plan;
- A description of how the technology the school district hopes to acquire will help support state content and student performance standards, as well as provide access for teachers, parents and students to the best teaching practices and curriculum resources; and
- A description of the evaluation process the district will use to determine how the technology is integrated into the school curriculum and how student achievement is affected. ■

If you would like more information about these grants, please contact Nancy Coopersmith, OPI (tel: 444-5541; email: <ncoopersmith@opi.mt.gov>).

SummitNet

(continued from page 4)

Network Montana can help school districts navigate these steps by providing technical and procedural information to a school district's technology representatives. Network Montana personnel can also help school districts evaluate their networking plans and vendor proposals.

SummitNet costs

Use determines the cost for SummitNet. School districts with a higher-speed connection to the network will pay more than those with a moderate-speed connection. For the most part, only the largest districts will require the high bandwidth circuits. To save on connection and support costs, small districts are encouraged to work together and connect as one entity.

The current SummitNet rates for unlimited access are:

- ✔ $110 per month for moderate-speed (56 Kbps) connections (capable of transmitting 56,000 bits per second), and
- ✔ $490 per month for high-speed (T-1) connections (capable of transmitting 1,544,000 bits per second).

This means that a district with 110 workstations connected to the network can have access for $1 per month for each workstation.

Circuit costs represent another recurring cost. These are billed by the communications provider and range from $8 per month to more than $250, depending on the provider, the type of service, and the proximity of an aggregation site. US WEST provides the primary data link for SummitNet circuits.

Contact Network Montana

To investigate SummitNet's opportunities contact Tom Morarre, Network Montana (tel: 243-6677 or 243- 5454; email: *<nmp@selway.umt.edu>*). If you already have Internet access, check Network Montana's website at *<www.nmp.umt.edu>*We look forward to hearing from you. ■

—Tom Morarre, Network Montana Project, and Kerry Spickelmeier, ISD.

"I Love to Read!" Month

On Valentine's Day, people often pay extra-special attention to their loved ones by buying cards and chocolate or ordering roses. In many schools across Montana, the entire month of February is dedicated to a different kind of romance—the love of reading. During "I Love to Read!" Month, school staff plan special events and contests around activities involving reading. These events exhibit considerable creativity on the part of the planners, and they certainly create a lot of fun for students. Read on for some ways that schools observed last year's "I Love to Read!"Month....

East Glacier students shoot Cupid's arrow

At East Glacier school we celebrated a very successful *I Love to Read!* month. The students in grades K-8 were challenged to "Hit the Heart with Cupid's Arrow."

The title of each book a student read was written on a six-inch arrow. The goal was to have the line of arrows stretch from Cupid at one end of the school to a heart at the other end.

Our students read so many books that the arrows made it to the heart and all the way back to Cupid again (over 700 books). As a reward, the whole school went to Cut Bank to Pizza Hut for lunch and then to a movie.

During Valentine's week, we had special *I Love to Read!* activities every day. Monday, after a kickoff assembly, we had a DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) day. Tuesday, many students dressed up as their favorite storybook character and paraded through the school. Wednesday, we had a reading marathon with eight hours of continuous reading going on in a comfy chair in the gym. Thursday, our school took a field trip and we had reading activities on the bus—a scavenger hunt for the older students and stories for the younger students. Friday, in a school assembly, four community members (an outfitter, a sheriff, and two former teachers) told the student body why reading was important to them.

Every student in our school enjoyed the *I Love to Read!* activities and we are already thinking about how we want to celebrate reading next February. ■

—Jo Carpenter, Kindergarten Teacher, East Glacier School

Last year, superintendent Bob Heppner challenged Ryegate students during *I Love to Read!* Month. If they read 10,000 pages in the month of February, he would dress up as his favorite storybook character. The students more than met their goal. When "Mr. H." showed up in a bunny suit, everyone had fun; they gathered in the gym for a group picture and a round of the bunny hop!

Students "get caught" reading in Missoula

The Missoula County Public Schools' elementary and middle school library media specialists organized an effort to "catch" students' families reading.

For four days during February, librarians spent an hour each evening calling the homes of students who had registered to "Get Caught Reading." When a librarian reached someone at home, they asked whether those registered were reading or being read to. Each family was called only once during the four days, and students whose families were "caught reading" received a button, bookmark, and certificate.

The students at Cold Springs School in Missoula celebrated *I Love to Read!* Month with several activities. One week, students were encouraged to follow book-related dress themes like *Hats off to Books*—hats; *Slip into a Good Book*—slippers; and *Round Up Some Great Books*—western wear.

In addition, first graders and PK-1 participated in a pretend sleepover at school. They came to school dressed in pajamas, robes, and slippers, and then they spent an hour lounging and listening to bedtime stories. ■

—Sharon Yould, Cold Springs School, Missoula

Reading Roundup

Plevna Elementary held a week-long "Reading Roundup." Students read their books in a corral furnished with hay bales and a horse saddle. Cowboy teachers rode herd in the classrooms, while wanted posters and western poetry and stories lined the halls. There were even a few shootouts, but nothing more serious than busy cameras.

Grades K-6 entered into a challenge with Mr. Vennes; the students bet they could read more books than he weighed. On judgement day, the students weighed in with 501 pounds of books and won a party. ■

"Read...For A Capitol Gain"

Designed for *I Love to Read!* Month, the project idea "Read...For A Capitol Gain" is the "brainchild" of Julie Stillman, teacher, and John Moffatt, principal, at Garfield Elementary in Lewistown. This project is being promoted by the Montana State Reading Council and is a perfect idea to develop students' enthusiasm for reading.

The "Read...For A Capitol Gain" project has a dual meaning. Participants invest in their future and reap the gains as lifelong readers. Money raised during this reading project will go to the Montana State Capitol building for repairs and maintenance. Garfield students and teachers devised a plan to tie reading with raising funds for the Capitol renovation. This project provides many opportunities for integrated, cross-curricular study, motivation to increase reading time, and opportunities for civic involvement.

The Garfield staff planned a variety of activities such as guest readers to read to students in their classrooms, cross-age reading activities,

(Continued on page 12)

Around the world in February

At Rau Elementary School, our reading took us on a journey around the world!

Throughout the month, we held spontaneous, 10-minute reading periods every day.

Parents and students tallied the minutes students read each day, including the time they spent at school or at home reading magazines, recipes, newspapers, etc. When they returned their reading slips, a passport was stamped so they could get into the new country.

The tabulated minutes "moved" a hot air balloon from country to country around the world. Progress notes were sent home daily with the students so parents could share the journey.

Various guests came to speak about their experiences in different countries. Our speakers told of Ireland, Korea, Philippines, Hong Kong, France, Romania, and China. Articles and flags were displayed throughout the school from all over the world. The local French club taught French to some of our students for a week.

The grand finale was a "taste fest" held the end of February. Students and parents were encouraged to bring their favorite foreign food for an afternoon potluck. We sampled foods representing many different countries. We had a great turnout and to top it off, the students entertained their parents and guests with songs from around the world. We then collected the recipes into an international cookbook which was shared with the students.

We had a wonderful month! Not only did this project inspire students and parents to read more, but the journey around the world introduced them to different cultures and languages in an interesting, personal manner.

Rau is a small country school five miles from Sidney. We have grown to 76 students, grades K-6. We are proud of our innovative teaching techniques and feel our "I Love To Read!" project was one of our best. ■

—Nancy Vaira, Clerk, Rau School District

Input on educational resources for Montana history sought

Montana Historical Society discontinues participation in National History Day

This year—1996-1997—marks the first time since 1984 that the Montana Historical Society (MHS) has not sponsored Montana's participation in the National History Day program.

Greater participation is the goal

Discontinuing Montana's participation was a difficult decision. The purposes, guidance, and format the National History Day program offered have been valuable to those Montana schools and students who participated. The trip to Washington, D. C., has been prized, and, for the number of participants representing our state, Montana's delegation has always placed well in national competition.

However, MHS's $3,500-$4,000 annual investment in National History Day reached a very small number of schools; for the last two years, only six Montana middle schools have participated, and several of the schools who have competed recently have also been considering alternative programs.

Hence, MHS has chosen to discontinue its involvement for the immediate (though not necessarily permanent) future and to try some Montana-based alternatives.

Plans for a new History Day

According to Marcella Sherfy, MHS Education Officer, MHS intends to develop and find substantial funding for an alternative history day program that would reach more schools and students.

MHS would like to develop a program that

✔carries forward the best elements of National History Day;

We have a strong desire for some feedback from Montana teachers and students.
—Marcella Sherfy, MHS

✔emphasizes competition less and breadth of participation more;

✔focuses on student research into community and regional history and on student interaction with community history resources: senior citizens, local newspapers, archives, libraries, local buildings, etc.;

✔allows MHS to provide active assistance and a wide-range of materials that classroom teachers will actually use as guides and resources; and

✔culminates in local and district heritage fairs and a state event that have competitive, educational, and social elements.

The Historical Society anticipates kicking off the new program this coming school year.

MHS Education Office wants ongoing teacher advice

As important, Sherfy notes "we need consistent, broad-ranging, representative advice and guidance from the teaching community—for this project and many others that the Montana Historical Society offers."

Currently, the MHS provides many educational resources for teachers and students in grades K-12. In addition to National History Day, those resources include traveling footlockers, slide units, and videos; guided tours of the Original Governor's Mansion, the Capitol, and Society museum galleries; and some additional heritage education curriculum materials.

Sherfy says that "most of these materials or programs were developed in the 1980s with substantial grant funding from the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust. Many are due for 'tuning up.' In addition," Sherfy reports, "we'd like to offer many more, and we have begun work on an application that might be of interest to several foundations."

Starting a conversation

While several MHS staff have had teaching experience, Sherfy notes they are removed from current practice, needs, and emphases in the way that active teachers apply them.

"Common sense, and our hope to be of genuine benefit to classrooms just plain necessitate ongoing 'conversations' with Montana teachers," she says.

So, what now? What next?

Please read the two articles written by Sherfy on page nine. One outlines a proposal the MHS Education Office has developed for a possible program to replace Montana History Day: the Montana Heritage Learning Program. The second article reports on the creation of a Montana Historical Society Teachers' Advisory Panel.

"*Please*,"Sherfy says, "write, call, or fax us with your response and your ideas. Be as general or as specific as you want. Be direct—blunt! Don't be shy about volunteering for the Teachers'Advisory Panel, or pointing us to other teachers whose work and interests recommend them for involvement." And, she adds, "if you are going to be in Helena, please feel free to stop in and talk with us." ■

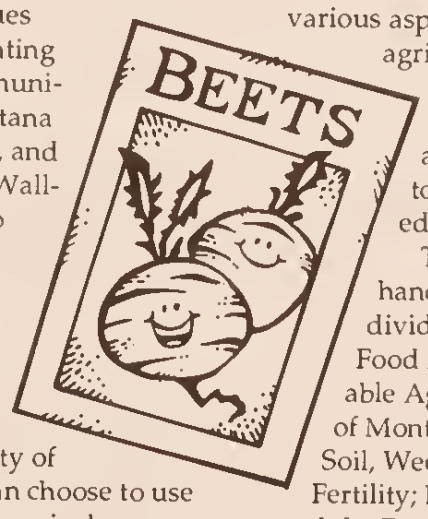
You can write, call, or fax Marcella Sherfy in the Montana Historical Society's Education Office. The address is P.O. Box 201201, Helena, MT 59620-1201 (tel: 444-4794; fax: 444-2696).

Montana group produces sustainable agriculture curriculum

Twenty-four-foot-tall Martians with pointy heads surround an unsuspecting farmer in the act of making compost. Fearing for his family, the farmer asks what they want.

In eerie monotone voices, the Martians explain they are scientists seeking information about the substance known as soil in order to rejuvenate their planet. Relieved, the farmer explains the decomposition process and demonstrates how to make compost.

This scene is familiar to thousands of Bitterroot sixth-grade students. It is also just one of over 30 activities educators can choose from a new curriculum, *Montana's Sustainable Agriculture: Farming With Foresight*. Written by Kerry Wall-MacLane, the curriculum is sponsored by the Lewis & Clark Conservation District and funded by the Montana State Department of Natural Resources. The project itself is being coordinated by the Alternative Energy Resource Organization (AERO), a non-profit, Helena-based organization whose members work on issues pertaining to creating sustainable communities. Several Montana teachers, farmers, and ranchers helped Wall-MacLane develop the curriculum.



The curriculum

Designed for grades 4-6, the curriculum can be used in a variety of ways. Teachers can choose to use just the curriculum lessons; they can order a special trunk, which contains all the materials for activities in a ready-to-go format; and they can use a video on sustainable agriculture in conjunction with the lessons.

Most exciting of all, the curriculum gives contacts for over 100 farmers and ranchers around the state who have agreed to visit classrooms or host field trips. Many of the producers on the resource list are members of AERO's Montana Farm and Ranch Improvement Clubs and are conducting research projects on various aspects of sustainable agriculture. Their participation in the project adds a real-life application that is all too often missing in our educational system.

The interdisciplinary, hands-on curriculum is divided into eight parts: Food Production; Sustainable Agriculture; the History of Montana's Agriculture; Soil, Weeds, and Insects; Fertility; Diversity; Animals; and the Future of Montana's Agriculture. The segments are designed to follow the USDA's video, *Sustaining America's Agriculture*.

Curriculum trunks

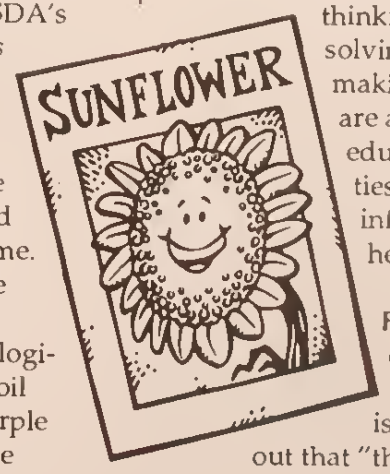
Two trunks are available on a first-come, first-served basis for two weeks at a time. They contain materials like seed, books, potting soil, audio and video tapes, biological pest controls, organic soil amendments, and even purple mesh onion bags to give the Martians pointy heads.

The only cost is shipping and handling, which teachers can save if they pick up the trunk in Corvallis.

The author

Wall-MacLane has been teaching sustainable agriculture to Montana children since 1984. Also, one of the driving forces behind Garden City Seeds, Kerry was awarded the "Sense of Wonder" award in 1994 by the Montana Environmental Education Association (MEEA). She sees the curriculum as "a fun way to share the concept of sustainability with Montana students."

In critiquing the curriculum, Wall-MacLane says "the concepts involved in sustainable agriculture involve students in systems thinking, problem solving, and decision making. Plus, there are a lot of fun educational activities and good information in here."



Future developments?

Wall-MacLane is quick to point out that "the development of this curriculum will be ongoing, and we will strive to improve it every year." One of the im-

(Continued on page 12)

The Montana Historical Society creates a Teachers' Advisory Panel

A predominant goal of the MHS is education—for people of all ages and interests.

Within that broad goal, MHS is committed to encouraging K-12 students to study and develop an understanding of Montana's history and prehistory; the history of the West; and the development of Montana communities.

An underpinning belief is that understanding and appreciating Montana's history can be the objective of many school grades and many subjects. Also, the very *process* of researching and learning about state and local history is as important as knowing a specific body of information.

Teacher input important

For the last 20 years, MHS has offered materials, programs, and tours to Montana teachers and their classes. They have had both formal and informal teacher input in the development and use of that material. To improve the focus, usefulness, and use of these educational programs and materials—and to develop new materials and programs that fit honest needs—MHS seeks regular, widely representative advice from Montana's teaching community.

Panel format

Six people will sit on the Panel: two elementary, two middle school, and two high school teachers. Members will be appointed by the MHS director, and their selection will be based on their willingness, demonstrated interest in teaching with Montana and community history, statewide representation, and available time. School administrators with teaching experience in Montana history are also welcome.

Panel members will serve three-year terms, which will be staggered initially to ensure overlap. Their duties will include:

- ✔ at least one in-person meeting each year;
- ✔ special, topical meetings may be scheduled as well, but no more than two per year; and
- ✔ reading and commenting on curriculum-enrichment materials, grants, and texts or text supplements for history teaching.

MHS will cover panel members' travel costs. In addition, the time panel members devote to panel business will count as teacher certification renewal credits.

Initial Projects for Review and Discussion

The initial projects the Advisory Panel will undertake will be the evolution from National History Day to Montana Heritage Learning Fairs (see story below); the current needs for Montana history texts and text supplements; and, finally, traveling audio-visual resources. ■

—Marcella Sherfy, Education Officer, Montana Historical Society

The Montana Heritage Learning Program

To increase the number of students and schools that participate in and beneft from preparing and presenting in a history day program, the MHS would like to sponsor the Montana Heritage Learning Program.

The underlying idea is to encourage Montana's middle and high school students to gain an appreciation of their community history within the context of Montana history by researching specific community-history topics and presenting their findings.

Possible program components

The MHS Educaton Office has come up with this suggested framework. These ideas are preliminary, prepared for comment and feedback.

- ✔Each year a broad, community-history oriented topic will be selected.
- ✔The MHS will prepare a series of guides for teachers on local research. These guides may range from curriculum guides, to "how to" information specifically for teachers.
- ✔Based on each year's theme, the MHS will provide teachers and students with directions for presenting their Heritage Learning projects, using many of the same directions used in National History Day.
- ✔The program structure will encourage multi-disciplinary oversight within schools for students in project research and presentation.
- ✔The MHS will provide schools and local historical societies with guidance in organizing local heritage fairs, at which students can display their projects.
- ✔Arrangements will be made for district heritage fairs and an annual Montana Heritage Learning Celebration, which will include judging of district Heritage Learning "winners," special events for students and teachers, and a long-term display of student projects.
- ✔The annual Montana History Conference will offer special enrichment sessions for teachers involved in Heritage Learning.
- ✔The MHS press will prepare a Montana-history text and text supplements.
- ✔The possibility of adding a step to the Heritage Learning Program, whereby Montana would once again participate in National History Day, would be periodically reconsidered.

Program implementation

To develop this program, MHS would ask the newly created Teachers' Advisory Panel to define the goals of this program more precisely and to outline and refine program particulars. In addition, MHS proposes to seek grant funds from major foundations in order to establish this program permanently—with the ability to refine it as teacher and student needs change. ■

—Marcella Shery, Education Officer, Montana Historical Society

MHS Resources

The MHS offers a wide range of educational materials and opportunities for Montana teachers and students in elementary through senior high.

Historical Tours

Guided tours of the Capitol, the Original Governor's Mansion, and the Montana Historical Society are available at no charge.

Activity guides for focused field trips (special tours integrating classroom study with the museum experience) are available at cost. Reservations should be made at least two weeks in advance, and special arangements can be made for large groups.

Tour schedule

✔ *Capitol:* Monday-Friday —Tours on the hour, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

✔ *Original Governor's Mansion:* Monday-Friday—Tours at 10 & 11 a.m. and 1 & 2 p.m.

✔ *Montana Historical Society Exhibits:* Monday-Friday, except Wednesday—Tours on the hour, 9 a.m. -4 p.m.

Footlockers and slide units

Teachers can reserve class footlocker exhibits and slide shows focusing on themes in Montana history for one week per unit. Use of the footlockers and slide units requires payment of shipping either back to MHS or to another school.

There are a number of different footlockers including:

- ✔ Ranching and the Cowboy;
- ✔ Frontier Military;
- ✔ Fur Trade;
- ✔ Montana's Immigrants;
- ✔ Mining; and
- ✔ Life at Pictograph Cave.

Slide units on Montana history, which were developed specifically for use at middle and high school levels, are also now available. ■

For information, brochures, and reservations call Deanna Johnson in the MHS Education Office, 225 North Roberts, PO Box 201201, Helena, MT 59620-1201 (tel: 444-4789; fax: 444-2696).

Peer Counseling

(Continued from page 4)

peers with everyday problems they may face.

"Feedback from past participants has played a major role in the continuation of this program," says Jones. A PHS graduate noted the course, for her, was the best class she took during high school. It helped her to learn more about people, the profession of psychology, and herself.

Program background

Jones first learned about peer counseling through conferences and professional literature. She adapted the ideas she encountered and came up with her own curriculum.

The concept behind Peer Counseling has been used in other Montana cities. It is currently being used in Missoula and has been used in Whitefish. Statistics on the national use of this program are unknown.

Community feedback

Many positive things have been said about PHS's program.

"I was very pleased with the peer counseling program this year," said Luanne Atkinson, a Linderman Elementary School teacher. "My class has a lot of students with special needs. This program gave them a chance to get the extra attention and help they really needed."

Linderman School principal David Weld echoes Atkinson's statement. "Having the PHS Peer Counseling kids at our school is a win-win situation. Linderman students benefit by having a positive role model, intensive tutoring, a non-judgmental ear, and extra positive attention."

"The high school students," Weld adds, "benefit by having the experience of nurturing, a broader perspective of life, the chance to be needed, the chance to see the direct effects of their time and energies, and a chance to evaluate a possible career." ■

—Kristi Greenwood and Amanda Tucker, seniors and journalism students at Polson High School.

"Field Notes" is a forum for Montana educators, students, parents, and others involved in education. Views presented in Field Notes do not necessarily represent views of the Office of Public Instruction.

This issue's Field Notes come from Polson.

Dispatches

"Dispatches" are updates by Office of Public Instruction staff. Staff members may be reached at the phone numbers or email addresses listed or by writing them at the Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

Division of Academic and Professional Services
Linda Peterson, Administrator

Curriculum and Assessment
Jan Hahn, Specialist
444-3714
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Performance-Based Accreditation

The end of January, about 100 representatives from Montana's 17 Performance-Based Accreditation (PBA) Schools held their second training session in Missoula and Billings. This group is called MISTA (Montana: Improving Schools Through Accreditation). Facilitated by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL), this training session was excellent! Because of the quality of their training and the fact that these *School Improvement Teams* have learned how to involve school staff and the public, their communities have been very supportive of the PBA process thus far.

In March, MISTA participants will be attending a third training session and presenting an update on PBA to Montana's Board of Public Education.

A community process

Most MISTA schools have, at this point, held two or three public meetings, with attendance ranging from 20-120 people. They have community-supported mission statements, values and beliefs statements, educational goals, and the beginnings of quite elaborate school- community profiles. They will hold public meetings to develop *Desired Learner Results* (or Exit Performance Standards) before their March training in Bozeman.

Thus far, MISTA is proving to be a shining example of how successful school improvement can be supported by organizing training, providing guidance, and then allowing schools to build their own networks and design their own school improvement plans.

Future plans for MISTA

The NWREL has trained this group of pilot schools for free, and the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges has generously helped with the food for these meetings. Otherwise, the participating schools have borne the costs. It is hoped that this year's pilot group will be able to carry on the training when a new group of schools begins the PBA process next year.

PBA resources available

If you would like to see copies of the handouts from the MISTA trainings, please call me. We also have more Performance-Based Accreditation User's Manuals available. Please call me if you would like one.

Science-Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools
Patricia B. Johnson, State Coordinator
444-2736
pjohnson@opi.mt.gov

The Consortia

One of ten Regional Consortia established by Congress, SMCNWS (The Science and Mathematics Consortium for Northwest Schools) works to improve science and mathematics teaching in Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. Funded by national-level Title II (Eisenhower) funds, the consortia are administered by the United States Department of Education (USDOE).

The Columbia Education Center, in Portland, Oregon, received the USDOE grant to direct SMCNWS. The Center, in turn, contracted with OPI for my services. As Montana Coordinator, I essentially hold two half-time positions, one regional and one serving Montana.

The coordinator's state duties

I work to make the science and mathematics opportunities that SMCNWS provides available to Montana educators. Some of these are further explained in this column. In addition, I developed an SMCNWS-Montana webpage in collaboration with Annette Barber, MSU-Northern. The address of Montana's page is *<http://col-ed.org/mt/>*.

The coordinator's regional duties

On the regional side, my responsibilities include identifying and distributing information about non-school-based organizations that provide science and math education. These providers are often called "informal providers" or just "informals." The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse will host a list of the larger informals—such as zoos, aviaries, and museums—on its website, which the public can now access.

At the same time, I am preparing a print document compiling this information for the five northwest states. When it is completed, the document will also be available electronically on the SMCNWS web site at *<http://www.col-ed.org>*.

An appeal

Please do not confuse my position with the former OPI positions of science or mathematics specialist. OPI will be hiring an Eisenhower specialist in the near future. In the meantime, address your questions about science, mathematics, or the OPI Eisenhower program to Linda Peterson (444-5726).

Opportunities for educators

SMCNWS, in partnership with the Eisenhower National Clearinghouse (ENC) and the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), gives Montana educators many opportunities to access both resources and professional development.

ENC Access Centers

The ENC in Ohio is the national repository for K-12 mathematics and science materials. Like the Library of Congress, it does not lend; one must visit in order to access the materials. To make its information more accessible, the ENC maintains a webpage containing grant opportunities and information, as well as lessons, publications, and resources. *<http://www.enc.org>*

The ENC has one demonstration site in each of the ten national science and mathematics consortia. In our region the demonstration site is housed in the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) in Portland. Since OMSI is accessible only to local and visiting students and educators, SMCNWS decided to make the ENC information available to a larger audience.

To that end, SMCNWS selected two ENC Access Centers from each of the five states in our region, and one staff member from each site was trained, expenses paid, at OMSI in early November. As part of normal services, each facility requires Internet connectivity, regular hours, and accommodation of walk-in traffic.

ENC Access Sites

Several Montana facilities applied, and because another state gave up one position, Montana was able to send three people to the training. As a result, Montana also has three access sites, which are located in Billings, Missoula, and Havre.

Individuals or groups of teachers can use these sites to find out how to use the ENC website in class. Contact the access center coordinator nearest you for services: Dr. Ken Miller—MSU-Billings (tel: 657-2034; email: *<edci_miller@vion.emc mt.edu>*); Dr. David R. Erickson—UM-Missoula (tel: 243-5318; email: *<erickson@selway.umt.edu>*); and Annette Barber—MSU-Northern (tel: 265-3795; email: *<barbera@nmc1.nmclites.edu>*).

AAAS Project 2061

The American Association for the Advancement of Science started this project to help school districts train staff to meet the emerging curriculum standards in science, mathematics, and technology. This past November, six Montanans attended an AAAS Project 2061 training session in Seattle. Those participants, Monica Tomayer—Fort Benton; Carrol McLean and Judy Nelson—Hardin; Cliff Knighton—Bridger; and Mike Birrer—Poplar, arranged for their own travel costs.

As part of their training, they received a valuable benchmark kit and a professional development CD-ROM not yet available for public consumption. These six teachers are now expected to train others in standards-based curriculum.

SMCNWS Staff Development Support

The application period for SMCNWS Staff Development Support closed February 3, 1997. Successful applicants will be announced in the next issue of *Montana Schools*.

POTLATCH: Sharing Our Best

You are invited to recommend programs and practices for inclusion in a catalog of innovative mathematics and science programs. SMCNWS will publish *POTLATCH: Sharing Our Best* to bring this information to the attention of educators in the Northwest. Nominations must be made by someone outside the program.

Please call me to request nomination forms. This is a good chance to recognize the great science and mathematics programs in Montana.

Division of Health Enhancement and Safety
Spencer Sartorius, Administrator

Nutrition Education and Training
Katie Bark, Coordinator
994-5641
uhdkb@montana.edu

Resources

School Food Services at OPI and the Nutrition Education and Training Program offer many services and resources to help schools with their nutrition education efforts or school food service programs. Here is a list of some of the newest services and resources available for teaching your students and their families better health through good nutrition.

✔ *Community Nutrition Action Kit:* This easy-to-use tool will help schools and communities work together to improve children's health. It contains 24 test-piloted youth activities, 12 family or caregiver activities, and six community activities.

✔ *Food, Family and Fun: A Seasonal Guide to Healthy Eating*: This recipe book includes a collection of 50 recipes organized by season, featuring family nutrition education activities. Some recipes are lower fat versions of more typical family dishes.
✔ *Team Up At Home: Team Nutrition Activity Booklet*: Developed in cooperation with Scholastic and the National Parent Teacher Association, this booklet helps families reinforce healthy eating at home.
✔ *Scholastic Nutrition Classroom Kits:* Three complete classroom kits have been developed by Scholastic for grade levels PreK-K, grades 1-2, and grades 3-5. Each kit has a teacher's guide with eight age-appropriate lessons, student worksheets, and parent handouts.
✔ *Serving It Safe: A Manager's Tool Kit:* This compre..ensive training kit covers food service sanitation and safety. Each school food service authority in Montana should have received a kit from the USDA.

Personal assistance available

Through USDA Team Nutrition training grants, our office can provide schools with personal assistance.

✔ *Nutrition training teams:* Twelve regional teams consisting of school administrators, teachers, school food service managers, community nutritionists, and home economists can both provide teaching ideas for nutrition education and help schools with their Team Nutrition events.
✔ *Regional nutrition consultants:* School food service staff can receive one-on-one assistance in implementing the new school meal regulations from regional nutrition consultants. These consultants can help schools implement a NuMenus system, offer suggestions for balancing the menus to meet the nutrition standards, or analyze a week of your school lunch menus to determine how your program meets the nutrition standards.

For more information on any of these services or resources, please contact me, OPI's School Food Services (444-2501), or leave a message in the School Food Services conference on METNET.

Traffic Education
Curt Hahn, Specialist
444-4432
chahn@opi.mt.gov

State Traffic Education Conference

The 1997 Traffic Education Conference is scheduled for April 27-29 at Fairmont Hot Springs. Registration information will be mailed in March, and both university credit and renewal units will be available for participants.

The usual

Do not forget to submit your reimbursements to this office *when you complete each program* you conduct. Also, if you have moved, please send me your new address.

Driving with antilock brakes

To use a vehicle with an Antilock Brake System (ABS) correctly, many of us must unlearn past driving habits. Antilock brakes are not superbrakes that simply shorten a car's stopping distance; they are designed to provide better control during emergency braking, especially on slippery surfaces. The ABS computer keeps brake pressure at a level as close as possible to lockup, giving maximum deceleration while still allowing the wheels to move and provide directional control. As a result, vehicles with ABS engaged will continue to steer even under severe braking.

So, if you have to stop fast in a car with antilock brakes, don't pump the brakes or jerk the wheel. Press hard on the brake pedal and don't let up, even when you feel the pedal pulse or hear some noise. As you keep steady pressure on the brake, steer smoothly and aggressively in the direction you want to go. In other words, *stomp and steer, do not pump the brakes!*

A National Highway Transportation Safety Administration study found that ABS-equipped vehicles are involved in a surprising number of run-off-the-road accidents. While more than half of all new vehicles have ABS, many drivers are not familiar enough with antilock brakes to use them effectively. Before you find yourself in an emergency situation, consider practicing a few times in an empty parking lot after a hard rain. Hopefully you can set up this same experience for the students in your traffic education classes so they, too, will know what to expect.

For further instruction, you can order *Don't Let Up*, an ABS video, at no cost from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, 1440 New York Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20005. The state audiovisual library at Western Montana College in Dillon also has a copy.

Don't drive drowsy

Driving drowsy can be just as lethal as driving drunk. Several groups, including the National Sleep Foundation and the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, are crusading to awaken drivers to the dangers of fatigue.

Experts at the Stanford University Sleep Disorders Clinic and Research Center say, "we need massive education. People must regard drowsiness as a red alert. To keep driving is like drinking from a bottle with a skull and crossbones." Drowsiness causes an estimated 1,500 fatalities a year, or 4 percent of the nation's total fatalities—that figure does not include the thousands of non-fatal accidents attributable to drowsy drivers.

Few people understand that sleep is a basic need, just like eating and breathing. Our bodies program themselves for regular sleep-wake cycles and our internal clocks call for a long period of nighttime sleep—eight hours for most people. We are sleepiest generally between 2-5 a.m. and also experience a dip in alertness around 2-3 p.m.

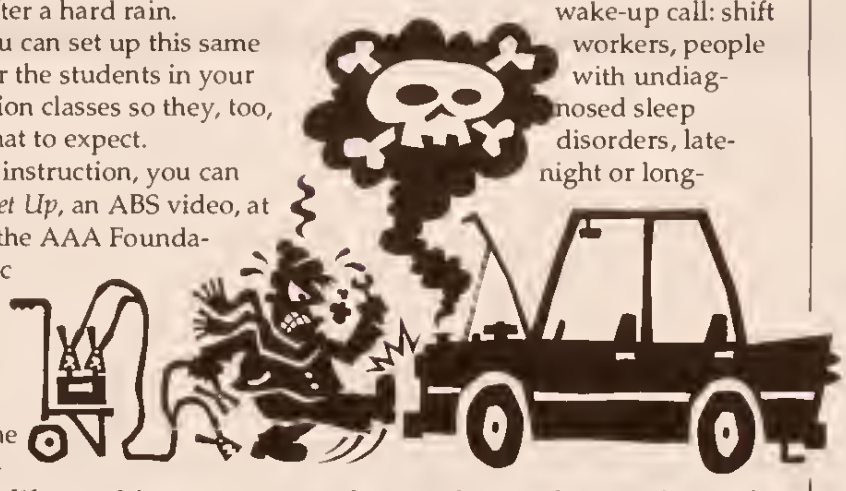
Experts say, "there's a point where you cannot overcome sleepiness. You start having microsleeps against your will, with no awareness. It's the microsleeps that kill people." Although the uncontrollable naps last only seconds, a vehicle going 55 mph travels more than the length of a football field during that time.

Some DON'Ts:
- Blast the radio full volume.
- Chew gum.
- Roll down the window or turn on the air conditioning.
- Think you can beat the Sandman.

Some DOs:
- Get a good night's sleep before a big day of driving.
- Plan long trips with a companion. Watch each other for drowsiness and trade off behind the wheel.
- Schedule regular stops every 100 miles or two hours.
- Drink coffee for short-term alertness, but know that caffeine will not counter extreme fatigue.
- Avoid alcohol, even small amounts.
- Find a safe place to stop if you are drowsy and take a 20-minute nap.

Who's at risk

While experts debate the dangers of drowsy driving for the general population, several groups need a wake-up call: shift workers, people with undiagnosed sleep disorders, late-night or long-distance drivers, drivers who drink alcohol, and commercial drivers.



Young drivers are also at great risk. In a North Carolina state study on fatigue behind the wheel, drivers age 25 and younger accounted for 55 percent of fall-asleep crashes, with three-fourths of those males. Fall-asleep crashes peaked at age 20. The National Sleep Foundation has found that "young people are chronically sleep-deprived. They're burning the candle at both ends." Compounding the problem, according to experts, teens and young adults need more sleep than people in their thirties.

Prevent Blindness America

Every year, 6,000 Americans suffer serious eye injuries due to poor battery handling. Safe battery jump-start procedures should be an essential part of every traffic education course. Prevent Blindness America, the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization, has responded to the problem of battery-related eye injury by developing an educational program for use with driver education students.

This program, *CAUTION: Battery on Board*, is the only one designed to educate motorists about the dangers batteries pose, the safe way to jump start a battery, and instructions on administering first-aid if a battery explodes.

The program contains an eight minute video, 25 jump start instruction stickers, an instructor guide, and a classroom poster. It is available for $20 plus shipping from Prevent Blindness America, 500 East Remington Road, Schaumburg, Illinois 60173-5611 (tel: 800-331-2020; fax: 847-843-8458).

Division of
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In February, I attended a multi-region U.S. Department of Education School-to-Work conference in Los Angeles as the Montana School-to-Work Systems Team representative.

J.D. Hoye, Director of the National School-to-Work Office, delivered the conference keynote address. Her comments contained, I believe, some important insights about School-to-Work—what it is and what it can be. Below is a short summary of some of the key points of her presentation.

What is School-to-Work

School-to-Work (STW) is about more than just work: it is about the kind of people we want to be; it is about our nation's ability to compete; it is about lifelong learning and individual development; it is about vision and commitment.

As Socrates said, "education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel," and STW should be considered in that light. STW is a vehicle by which we can transform education and expand our sense of the possible; it not only provides access to opportunity for all, it provides education for opportunity.

The School-to-Work system

In School-to-Work, we are building a system, not just delivering a program. To do that, we need to build upon what is working, but we also need to recognize that the old system contains structures and incentives that keep us locked into that system. If we are to escape their grasp, we need to establish our priorities, work to dismantle those stultifying structures and incentives, and change our educational system to reflect our priorities.

Relevance a key concept

Relevance needs to become the fourth "R" in a basic quality education. Stressing relevance in education will ensure that our students know something, and that they also know how to apply it.

(continued on page 11)

Dispatches

Work outside school is key

School-to-Work needs large-scale grassroots support from education, business, and community circles in order to attain and sustain the momentum that will allow it to take hold and survive. This means we all must look beyond the classroom doors for learning—we must value the learning that takes place in the workplace.

Eighty-five percent of the nation's high school juniors and seniors have a job, but the work experience of only three percent of these students forms a connection between school and work. This is a missed opportunity.

Schools must reinforce what is happening in the business world, and we must figure out a way for employers to become part of School-to-Work easily. Welfare reform must be a part of the whole system development, not a competing element. We must combine our efforts and have all programs work together.

In addition, there must be leadership development—at all levels and in all circles. If we are building a new system, we need leaders at all levels to generate community support.

Learning from the past

So, what's the difference between today's efforts and the Career Education program of the 1970s? The critical difference is that Career Ed was not brought to fruition. We missed the step of figuring out how to take it to work, how to use it, and how to make it relevant. Hopefully, we will be able to gather ourselves to make that crucial step with School-to-Work.

Goals

Director Hoyes laid out five goals for developing a School-to Work framework:

- ✔ We need to secure technical assistance in building and implementing a viable, sustainable School-to-Work system. We need to learn how to move beyond the "conference stage" and begin to effect real change.
- ✔ We need to spread the message that STW is about *all* students, not just the non-college minded.
- ✔ We need to develop networks and strategies that go beyond the immediate and sustain STW.
- ✔ We need to identify key indicators to serve as benchmarks, a way of measuring the quality of the overall STW system. These benchmarks need to contain a continuous improvement loop.
- ✔ We need to place emphasis on system set-up and management. We need to make sure the STW system has the tools to survive and improve.

Advisory Board meeting

The School-to-Work Advisory Board addressed many of these goals and comments during an inservice meeting in January. At that meeting board members participated in a workshop designed to help them build skills that will assist them in the development of a STW Statewide System.

The next STW Advisory Board meeting is set for April 9, 1997. By then, regional meetings and workshops will have been held in Missoula and Glendive on business and education partnerships.

Resources

I have School-to-Work Fact Sheets, a list of the schools receiving funds for STW, and STW Owner's Manuals. If you would like any of this information, please let me know.

Kudos

Hats off to Montana's students and teachers

Westinghouse Winner

Nicholas Karl Eriksson, a senior at Missoula Sentinel, received the $20,000 third place prize in this year's Westinghouse Science Talent Search. Eriksson is the first in his class and a budding mathematician.

For his project, Eriksson investigated the "partition function," the method for counting the ways a whole number can be divided into parts. This function generally has values that are very large and laborious to calculate. For example, the number 4 can be written in five ways(1+1+1+1; in three parts as 2+1+1; in two parts as 2+2 and 3+1; and in one part as 4); thus, the partition function of 4 has a value of 5.

Eriksson is also a gifted musician who plays saxophone and bassoon in the Montana All-State Band and the Missoula Youth Symphony. He was named outstanding soloist at the Lionel Hampton Jazz Festival.

Eriksson plans to attend the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and major in, not surprisingly, math.

Top youth volunteers

Keila Davis, 14—Helena and Jennifer Nydegger, 18—Townsend were named the state's top two youth volunteers in The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, a nationwide recognition program. These awards honor young people for outstanding, self-initiated community service activities.

Davis provides care for a two-year-old boy with AIDS. She has been volunteering her time for the child she calls her "little brother" since March of 1996. Davis said, "My goal is to educate others about AIDS so they will not be afraid of people with the disease."

Nydegger started a fundraising project to buy a flagpole for her school. Driven by a desire to share her love of the American flag with her community, she drummed up community support along with $1,500. Then, she organized a ceremony for the new flagpole in November. Nydegger said, "The greatest gift that can be given to anyone is your time." Davis and Nydegger will each receive $1,000, a silver medallion, and a trip to Washington, D.C., in May.

Whitewater's victorious Acadmic Challenge team poses on the steps of Montana's Capitol in Helena last May.

The award program's judges also named four other Montana students as Prudential Distinguished Finalists: *Aaron Bouscher*—Kalispell; *Maureen Sullivan*—Bigfork; *Marisa Franz*—Missoula; *Jeffrey Kuchel*—Florence.

Whitewater wins the 1996 Montana Academic Challenge

Last spring, the Whitewater high school team defeated 31 teams from other schools to win the 1996 Montana Academic Challenge.

Whitewater team members were Aimee and Ashley Hammond, Leslie Nelson, Andy Gertge, and Brant Beyer. The team was coached by Mike Beyer.

The Montana Academic Challenge is sponsored by the state's rural electric and telephone cooperatives. Each year, teams compete against each other, going head-to-head to answer tough questions on a range of academic subjects. The winner of each contest advances to the next round. The final matches are televised.

The Whitewater team also finished first in the state in both the Fall and Spring Knowledgemaster Opens, which are computerized academic competitions between schools. This excellence comes from a school where the average high school enrollment was 38 students during the 1995-96 school year.

Whitewater would especially like to thank its sponsor, Triangle Telephone Co-op of Havre, for the opportunity to compete in the Montana Academic Challenge.

First class teacher

Kari Peiffer is now in her second year as music and physical education teacher at Evergreen Elementary School in Kalispell. Her first year was such a rousing success she won a national award.

Sallie Mae, the national agency that funds college loans, selects one teacher from each state for its *Sallie Mae First Class Teacher Award* to recognize the nation's most outstanding elementary and secondary school educators during their first year of teaching.

First-year teachers need to be nominated by their principal or superintendent and must have performed outstandingly during the initial year of teaching. Sallie Mae sponsors these awards in cooperation with the American Association of School Administrators. Honorees are selected based on their instructional skills, interaction with students, and communication with faculty, staff, parents, and community.

Peiffer was nominated by Evergreen principal Paulette Pratt. As a Sallie Mae First Class Teacher, Peiffer won $1,500 and a trip to Washington, D.C.

PTA turns 100

The National Parent Teacher Association turned 100 on February 17, marking a century of advocacy for children. The PTA has been involved in education reform ever since it was formed a century ago — taking up a variety of issues aimed at improving the lives of children. The organization has advocated and worked for such reforms as a juvenile justice system, child labor laws, federal aid to help schools, automobile and bus safety programs, and hot lunch and immunization programs for children.

Most recently, the PTA has advocated making parental involvement part of national educational goals. Happy Birthday! ■

If you know of any student, teacher, administrator, staff or community member that deserves special recognition, please take the time to inform us. We'll print them as space allows.

Just write or call Beth Satre, Montana Schools Editor, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501 (tel: 444-4397; fax: 444-2893; email: <bsatre@opi.mt.gov>). Pictures are also welcome.

Bulletin Board

Listings in the Bulletin Board do not necessarily imply endorsement by the Office of Public Instruction.

Workshops

Grantwriting

The comprehensive grantwriting training program will be held at the Billings Sheraton Hotel on May 5-8, 1997. This internationally acclaimed workshop is presented by Community Systems of Bozeman, MT and conducted by Dr. Barbara Bader and Steven Carr.

This is a hands-on, how-to-do-it workshop that includes the Community Systems detailed 285 page grantwriting training/resource manual. Workshop participants receive extensive individual consultation during the workshop as well as a follow-up critique of their grant proposals.

The workshop is sponsored by the Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association in Helena. For further information, please contact MSPOA (443-5669). The deadline for registration is April 11, 1997, and cost is $575/participant.

Suicide prevention

On May 16, 1997, in Helena, the Mental Health Association of Montana (MHAM) and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services is sponsoring a suicide prevention workshop presented by David C. Clark, Ph.D.

The training session will include transferable skills for use by professionals to prevent suicide in the people they work with, including adolescents and the elderly; specific features of a diagnosis that leads one to be concerned about suicide; and suicide management within managed care constraints. For more information call MHAM for details (442-4276 or 800-823-MHAM).

Resources

Advice from principals

Get answers to your questions about schools, children, and education by calling the National Principal's toll-free hotline this April 13-15. For the eighth-year running, 150 principals from the National Association of Elementary School Principals will operate this hotline service to promote family involvement in schools. Call 1-800-944-1601. Callers may request a free copy of *On Call for Kids*, a booklet that give answers to questions most asked by parents during previous years.

Poster Contests

Keep Montana green

The Keep Montana Green Association is encouraging school children to enter their 36th annual fire prevention poster contest. Sponsored by the Montana DNRC, OPI, and Keep Montana Green this contest teaches fire prevention and conservation methods to school children each year. This year's poster contest theme is *Preventing person-caused wildfires in our forest and range lands*. The deadline for entering posters is April 1, 1997. Additional information and flyers are available from Michael Kopitzke, Keep Montana Green, 2705 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59801 (542-4251).

State parks

Montana State Parks is again sponsoring a statewide poster contest for fifth grade students. This years's theme is *State Parks Tell Montana's History Story*. The contest is an educational endeavor to enhance student's understanding, awareness, and appreciation for what exists in Montana's state parks. Participating schools will submit their top five selections as finalists in the contest. From among these, the top three will be chosen to receive prizes. The first place winner's school will receive a free FWP video and book. Contact Debbie Cheek, Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (444-4701). Deadline is April 4, 1997.

CALENDAR

March

16-18: FHA/HERO State Leadership Conference, MSU-Bozeman—Laurie Stelter, OPI, 444-2059
27: Montana Council of Deans of Education, Helena—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792
31: 1997 Consolidated Application Spring Workshop, Helena—Carol Gneckow, OPI, 444-2417

April

1: 1997 Consolidated Application Spring Workshop, Glasgow—Carol Gneckow, OPI, 444-2417
2-4: Montana AGATE "Building Bridges of Understanding," Great Falls—Keith Davey, 791-2270
3: 1997 Consolidated Application Spring Workshop, Cavanaugh's, Kalispell—Carol Gneckow, OPI, 444-2417
3-5: FFA State Conference, Great Falls—Sandy Thibault, MSU Bozeman, 994-3691
4: 1997 Consolidated Application Spring Workshop, 4 B's Convention Center, Missoula—Carol Gneckow, OPI, 444-2417
4: 1997 Consolidated Application Spring Workshop, Holiday Inn Billings Plaza, Billings—Carol Gneckow, OPI, 444-2417
4-6: Leadership Without Easy Answers MATELA/MAAE Retreat, 320 Ranch, Big Sky—Jan Hahn, OPI, 444-3714
7-9: VICA State Leadership and Skills Conference, MSU Northern, Havre—OPI Vocational Education, 444-4452
10-11: Board of Public Education, Helena—Sandee Henselbecker, 444-0302
21: 1997 Consolidated Application Spring Workshop, METNET and Eastern Montana Telemedicine Video Sites, Helena, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Dillon, Great Falls, Havre, Kalispell, Miles City, Missoula, Baker, Colstrip, Culbertson, Glasgow, Glendive, Sidney—Carol Gneckow, OPI, 444-2417
23-25: Montana Library Association Conference, Great Falls—John Thomas, 447-4343, e-mail: jthomas@carroll.edu
24-25: Certification Standards & Practices Advisory Council (CSPAC), Dillon—Peter Donovan, 444-0301
25-29: Business Professionals of America National Leadership Conference "Experience the Magic,"Orlando, FL—Marion Reed, OPI, 444-3000
27-29: 1997 Traffic Education Conference, Fairmont Hot Springs—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432

May

4-9: International Reading Conference, Atlanta, GA—June Atkins, 444-3664
6-9: AVIA American Vocational Information Association Conference, Albuquerque, NM—JD Lee, President 317-232-6990
22: Montana Council of Deans of Education, University of Great Falls—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792
22-23: Board of Public Education, Helena—Sandee Henselbecker, 444-0302

June

9-12: Literacy Learning in the Classroom, Helena—Marsha Davis 447-8521
9-27: Advanced Driver Education Workshops, Lewistown—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432
23-25: Montana School Food Association Conference, Billings Plaza Holiday Inn—Jaybe Elwess, Conference Chair, 278-5521
25-27: Montana Association of Pupil Transportation (MAPT) Workshops and Conference, Great Falls Holiday Inn—Cheryl Thares, MAPT, 791-2217

July

1: Montana Council of Deans of Education, Helena—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792
7-18: Advanced Driver Education Workshops, Lewistown—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432
16-18: CSPAC, Helena—Peter Donovan, 444-0301

October

1-3: 1997 Partners in Teaching and Learning Conference, Holiday Inn Billings Plaza and Convention Center—Gwen Smith, OPI, 444-5660
16-17: MEA/MFT Professional Development Convention, Great Falls—Eric Feaver, MEA, 442-4250

Reading ... For A Capitol Gain

(Continued from page 6)

and family reading nights. The students were challenged to read after the school day. Pledges were gathered, at a penny a page, by the students. The community also joined in the activity and pledged a penny a page for their reading. Decorated collection jars and cans were placed in various businesses. The Mayor signed a proclamation declaring February as "I Love to Read Month."

To promote the "Read...For A Capitol Gain" project, the Montana State Reading Council has developed a packet of materials. The packet contains information for starting a project, suggestions for activities, integrated curriculum activities, a bibliography and other materials to assist in developing a project in your school. For information about theproject contact: Jerrie Boksich, Chair (862-8620); Kandi Little, MSRC President 494-2120); John Moffatt, Principal Garfield Elementary (538-2366); June Atkins, OPI (444-3664); or your local reading council president. ■

—June Atkins, OPI, Professional Development Specialist

Ag curriculum

(Continued from page 7)

provements she would like to make is replacing the USDA video with one made in Montana. She explains, "the USDA video is good, but I wish we could find the funding to make a video that tells the stories of Montana producers, preferably from the viewpoint of their children." Although the curriculum has not been around long, AERO is already fielding requests for a high school level version.

Workshops

Training sessions are scheduled this spring for both agricultural producers and educators. To find out about these workshops, or to obtain a copy of the curriculum for a nominal shipping charge, write Bitterroot Down Home, Box 130, Corvallis, MT 59828 (tel: 961-5211; email: <*downhome@bitterroot.net*>). ■

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